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ABSTRACT

This Congressional hearing deals with the views of the private sector concerning adult illiteracy. Included among those organizations and firms represented at the hearing were the following: the Free Library of Philadelphia, B. Dalton Bookseller, the Hispanic Higher Education Coalition, Polaroid Company, Laubach Literacy Action, and the Association for Community-Based Education. (MN)

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OVERSIGHT HEARING ON ADULT ILLITERACY

ED242918

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
NINETY-SEVENTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, D.C., ON DECEMBER 2, 1982

Printed for the use of the Committee on Education and Labor



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OVERSIGHT HEARING ON ADULT ILLITERACY

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1982

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION,
COMMITTEE OF EDUCATION AND LABOR,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 9:40 a.m., in room 2261, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Paul Simon (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Members present: Representatives Simon and Erdahl.

Staff present: Maryln McAdam, legislative assistant; Betsy Brand, minority legislative associate; Nicholas Penning, legislative assistant; and Gilda Terragan, congressional fellow.

[Opening statement of Chairman Simon follows:]

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. PAUL SIMON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Good Morning. The hearing that we are about to convene today is the second in a series of hearings investigating the problem of illiteracy in America. During the first hearing held on September 21, 1982, we learned about the scope of the problem that is caused by illiteracy. The statistics that were brought out at that time were shocking. Secretary of Education, Terrel Bell, told us that by Department estimates there are as many as 25 million Americans who cannot read and write and up to 72 million who are functionally illiterate. Forty-seven percent of all black seventeen year olds are illiterate as are 56 percent of the Hispanic population. What these statistics mean for the country is critical. As our society changes on an almost daily basis to greater and greater reliance on technology and less reliance on manual labor, our citizenry is not able to keep pace with the increased demand for literacy skills.

Illiteracy also produces serious problems for individuals. People who cannot read and write adequately cannot find jobs, fill out forms, or do something as basic as help their children with homework. The loss of human potential is tragic. All too often people without literacy skills become chronic welfare recipients or worse yet, end up in jail. It is estimated that over 60 percent of the nation's inmates are illiterate. Very often the reason for their incarceration is directly related to the limitations imposed upon them by their lack of reading and writing skills. \$6.6 billion is spent annually to keep 700,000 illiterates in jail. At the private level and a general Federal assistance program such as that in the adult education act, as productive as they may be, are just not adequate to address a problem affecting nearly one-fourth of the adult population. We have come to a point where we must recognize illiteracy as a major national problem that needs a broad-based national commitment to ensure that it does not worsen. What the form of that commitment should be and how we should go about coordinating all the programs currently in existence into a cohesive national initiative has not been addressed. That is the reason we are having these hearings. In our previous hearing we heard from the Department of Education and the military. Today our witnesses are from the private sector. Hopefully, they will be able to shed some light on what directions we should be taking.

I want to thank you all for being here today. I realize that most of you have had to travel some distance to participate in this hearing. We appreciate your willingness to dedicate your time to helping us in this very serious matter.

(1)

Mr. SIMON. Good morning. The subcommittee hearing will come to order. We are following up on hearings that were held September 21, where we learned something of the scope of the problem of illiteracy. We heard some figures that were at the very least startling about the scope of the problem.

Secretary Bell, for example, and I don't know that anyone knows these figures precisely, but he used figures that there were as many as 25 million Americans who cannot read and write, up to 72 million who are functionally illiterate. He used this figure, and I asked him specifically about it, and he said, yes, this was validated by his department.

Forty-seven percent of all black 17-year-olds are illiterate, as are 56 percent of the Hispanic population. Obviously, those kinds of figures have great significance for the country. We have, in addition to our own population, the immigrant population, where we have special problems.

We are focusing on this again today. I guess what I am looking for, as the chairman of the subcommittee, is what we do, and I am not sure there is any one answer. What I am looking for is some kind of handle, some kind of coordinated Federal approach to this. Our friends from the libraries are here. I think libraries can be an important part of this. I think community colleges can be an important part. I think our prison system can be a part of it. I think there are a whole raft of areas where we can be doing some things to approach this problem.

I think our whole welfare system in some way can be used as a handle to determine who have problems and who does not have problems in our society, and how can we meet that, but we are not going to solve the problem simply with testimony here and a lot of good wishes. Somehow we have to pull the thing together.

Somehow we have to get a handle on this thing, and I don't have the answer, and I am groping for that. And as we hear from our witnesses, I guess I am eager to hear any suggestions you have as to how we get hold of this thing.

Before I call on our panel, I am going to call on our colleague who has also expressed a concern and interest in this area, Mr. Erdahl.

Mr. ERDAHL. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and I want to commend you for going ahead with these oversight hearings, because I think as we stop to think about the problems that you have outlined in a brief fashion for us this morning, of those that don't have adequate reading skills to function in a technical society, it certainly is a very serious problem for these individuals. It is a problem for the rest of us and for all of society, because we are missing out on some fantastic human resources.

I think, as you said, Mr. Chairman, it is something that we have to be concerned about, those of us in government. We have people here from library associations, from educators, from other groups as well, people involved in the sale of books, magazines, newspapers, the whole gamut, and it is a problem that we can no longer as an industrial society ignore when we have this unacceptable percentage within our population who cannot function adequately because of the lack of reading skills.

So I think we have outlined, or you have outlined for us, Mr. Chairman, the problem, and I think you also said now the goal must be to find some workable and reasonable solution, so let's hear what the witnesses have to share with us today.

Mr. SIMON. First our panel. The first panel will be Peter Waite, national director of the Laubach literacy program; Melissa Forinash Buckingham, reader development program, Free Library of Philadelphia; and Francisco Garza, legislative director of LaRaza, representing the Hispanic Higher Education Coalition.

Would the three of you please take your places here, and we will hear from all three of you and then ask questions. First I will call on Peter Waite.

STATEMENT OF PETER WAITE, NATIONAL DIRECTOR, LAUBACH LITERACY ACTION

Mr. WAITE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Peter Waite and I am the national director for Laubach literacy action. We are a voluntary group with programs in 46 states, 600 projects, and we have over 60,000 students. I guess in my brief opening remarks I wanted to start with a story that you probably heard before about a young hobo walking along the street and, seeing a fellow colleague down on all fours looking under a street light. He asked, "What are you doing under there?"

And he indicates, "Well, I am looking for a dime that fellow over there across the street dropped."

And the young fellow who was passing by said, "Well, why are you looking under the street light?"

And he said, "Well, there is more light over here."

Well, fundamentally, I think that that is the way we have been approaching literacy efforts in this country. We have been directing our efforts under the street light because it seems to be easier to do our work under the street light.

We have not had a serious impact on the problem, and what our organization is suggesting is that there are three key components that need to be considered if we are going to make a significant impact on the literacy in this country. The key is that you must consider all three components and not just one. Any program development, legislation or regulation should seriously consider the specific components that I am going to mention.

First, the development of projects need to have a community-based orientation. There needs to be a clear linkage between those projects and the communities they hope to serve. Recently the wife of the Vice President, Mrs. Barbara Bush, commented she felt that the problem needed to take a local orientation.

Indeed, before we have a national commitment, there needs to be local commitment to solve the problem, and projects and efforts that don't take into consideration those people they chose to serve, the local community and the community resources are going to fail.

There must be a sincere effort and intent at governance and direction for community-based programs to truly succeed.

The second component would be the establishment of public, private, and nonprofit partnerships.

There is also a peanut story that is sometimes referred to in this area. It shows Charley Brown watching TV, and he has Lucy come up and ask him to change the channel. He said, "Why should I change the channel?"

And Lucy says, "Well, you see this hand? Like this it is nothing, but when I fold it like this it's a weapon, it's terrible to look at and worse to behold."

Charley Brown looks back and says, "What channel do you want?"

But the last frame is the real key. Charley Brown is looking at his hand and he says, "Why can't you guys get organized like that?"

I think that is what we need to do in those three sectors. We need to get organized like that. We need to insure that indeed community colleges and libraries and other public sector agencies are coordinated with private sector organizations. Later you are going to hear from Polaroid, which is involved in doing things in-house. We will hear from B. Dalton Booksellers, which is making a national commitment to build these kinds of partnerships.

One of our staff people is on the West Coast now, filming the Quincy TV series, and that series is going to do a portion of their program on illiteracy, and they want to make sure it has an impact. These kinds of linkages are key to a successful effort. We must get organized. We must coordinate those efforts at the National, State, and local levels.

Finally, the third area is the massive utilization of volunteers. This is not a new effort. You have heard this before. People such as Jonathan Kozal have indicated that a massive army of volunteers can have a significant impact. Indeed he is right. He is naive. It is not going to be done in the way he is suggesting, but it is possible. Well-trained, coordinated volunteers in cooperation with public programs and with private efforts can make a significant impact on illiteracy in this country.

Finally, I just want to briefly close with a story, in this case just an experience of a student that I had some involvement with when I was State director out in Washington. I got a call in the first 2 or 3 weeks that I was on the job as literacy coordinator. A person from the peninsula, an old logger, said, "I want to know how to read. My children are getting of the age where they ask me to read stories to them and I can't read and my wife can't read. Can you get me a tutor?"

I said, "Sure, I think we can. Can I call you back and see what we can do?"

He said, "You can't call me here because I don't want people to know and I can't go to the library of the community college because I never go there and they will know something is wrong. Could you leave a message at Joe's Bar and Grill, which is down on Main Street?"

I said I probably can. Before he hung up he said, "Wait a minute, do you suppose that someone could tutor me back there in the backroom? There is a backroom and they would let me use that."

I said, "Well, we will see what we can do."

Well, we got him a tutor, and for 9 months he drank a little less beer and he learned how to read, and what I contend is that if we

seriously consider these three key components and make a commitment, we can start more programs which can work in the backrooms of bars, in the backrooms of hardware stores, and fire stations and schools and libraries, and you can have a significant impact on the illiteracy rate in this country.

Thank you.

[Prepared statement of Peter A. Waite follows:]

STATEMENT OF PETER A. WAITE, NATIONAL DIRECTOR, LAUBACH LITERACY ACTION

INTRODUCTION

A recent story tells of a local hobo passing another colleague on the street looking under a streetlamp. He asks, "Why are you down there under the streetlamp?" And the other fellow replies, "I'm looking for a dime that fell over there across the street." The first asks him, "Why are you looking under the streetlamp?" His friend responds, "Well there's more light over here." That story to some degree illustrates the condition of illiteracy efforts in this country. For the most part our efforts have been directed under the streetlamp and we have not had an impact on the problem. While more and more individuals are aware of the magnitude of illiteracy in this country, and more and more statistical information is becoming available, the degree to which we are developing new and innovative programs is very limited. Continuing to merely expand our existing efforts is not sufficient. We need to maintain a strong and viable public and private sector; however, involvement in it must be enhanced with a broader and more comprehensive effort nationally. Various individuals and organizations have suggested specific solutions to the problem. Some have been tested. Some have not. Some seem quite feasible, while others are nearly impossible. Laubach Literacy Action suggests that several components be addressed for any program to be successful. Any program development, legislation, or regulation, should seriously consider the specific components that we recommend.

Three critical components must be addressed for there to be any significant impact on illiteracy in this country. First, the development of community based programs, second, the initiation of new and innovative public, private, and non-profit partnerships, and third, the massive utilization of volunteers. It is important to note that it is the combination of these critical components that will make a significant impact on illiteracy. There is no single component which will spell success. Individuals have claimed that massive volunteer armies can be created to solve the problem. This is not the case. Others have suggested that by developing partnerships with the private sector and with non-profits, that a solution can be found. This is not the case. Finally, individuals have suggested that simply letting local communities develop solutions will rid us of illiteracy, and that alone is not a solution. The answer is a combination of those three critical elements and the development of comprehensive literacy program for the United States.

COMMUNITY BASED PROGRAMS

Mrs. Barbara Bush, the wife of the Vice President of the United States, and a sponsor for Laubach Literacy International, was recently asked what her feelings were regarding the solution to illiteracy in the United States. Her response focused on local individuals, school boards and community members taking responsibility for this problem in their local communities. This is a good base from which one may address the development of community based programs. We suggest that programs must have a clear linkage to the community they hope to serve. That may be a portion of a city, a portion of a town, a school district, or other local units which have a clear community identity. In some areas this might mean a local housing project, while in others it might cover a multi-county area.

To be clearly community based, however, literacy projects must have linkages with the individuals they hope to serve. This should be in an official capacity and preferably in some form of governance function. Input from local individuals, service providers, and potential clients, is key to successful literacy programming. Laubach Literacy Action projects exist in 46 states with little or no federal support. Many of these projects operate on minimal budgets and yet serve significant numbers within their community. They continue because they initially have developed community support and are working to become truly community-based. Many adult education programs can provide successful models for this kind of linkage. Commu-

nity colleges, libraries, school systems, and private industry programs can serve as important resources in the development of community based programs.

The key element in this component is the linkage between the program efforts and the local community. It must be sincere in its intent, in its governance, and in its direction. While many projects develop this component on paper, few have a truly community-based approach.

PUBLIC, PRIVATE, NONPROFIT PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships has become a key word as a result of various cutbacks in federal and state funding. While we support the establishment of these partnerships, it is important to note that we do not suggest a cutting back from one area to give to another. There must be strong, public, adult basic education programs, as well as an enhancement of alternative service delivery mechanisms.

The key to successful public, private, and non-profit partnership building is the strong desire for each to enhance the overall effort to combat illiteracy. Successful projects are able to identify the key resources in public, private or non-profit organizations, target these resources, and develop a clear sense of mission which is acceptable to all parties.

The specific goal which we seek is a reduction in illiteracy in the United States. Toward this end we believe that a clearly focused program can draw upon the resource and expertise in the public sector through adult basic education programs, libraries, schools, and similar organizations. It can draw from the private sector through industries, through funders, through independent enterprises, and it can draw from the non-profit sector, a sector frequently underutilized, capable of providing a strong and acceptable focal point for community resources.

These partnerships are key if we hope to be able to mobilize sufficient number of individuals and to identify sufficient financial resources to make an impact. The key to this successful effort lies in our ability to form and to maintain these critical partnerships. This will take practice, as well as sincere commitment on the part of all interested sectors.

MASSIVE UTILIZATION OF VOLUNTEERS

While this component to some degree requires the least explanation, it is also the most difficult. Even with additional resources and viable linkages to the local community, there are insufficient human resources for there to be a significant impact on the illiteracy problem. Consequently, the extensive utilization of well-trained and committed volunteers is key to any significant reduction in the illiteracy rate in the United States. We must be realistic about the utilization of volunteers. In particular we must consider the time and effort required to recruit and train volunteers and to staff programs. As a result of various model programs around the country it has been shown that it is possible to mobilize a significant army of volunteers to supplement public, private, and non-profit efforts. These volunteers can also provide services where few exist.

This will not be a simple or overnight effort. It will take a well-planned, strategic attack for it to be successful. More important, it may be our only chance to make a serious dent in the illiteracy problem. Experience to date has indicated that the utilization of effectively trained volunteers is both feasible and practical. A national commitment for reduction in illiteracy needs to capitalize on all successful models. We clearly need to address new and innovative ways for delivery of service. This volunteer army provides one avenue for that exploration.

SUMMARY

Briefly we have outlined the three components which are critical in the development of efforts by individuals, organizations or corporations, to combat illiteracy. Various studies have shown the extent of the problem and have outlined various recommendations. Based on those studies and our experience, we feel that these three components are critical. While there are clearly other considerations which need to be addressed with this core, we can begin to develop a clear national strategy which will be effective, efficient, and of reasonable cost. Simply putting more money into the existing efforts will not solve the problem. It can make an impact but it will not seriously address the critical needs. A restructuring of the service delivery system with attention paid to critical elements can be a method for recovery.

In closing I recall a middle aged logger out in Washington State who called one day asking for a tutor. He called the local office and I answered the telephone. He

wanted to learn to read because his children were asking him for help and they didn't know that he couldn't read. His wife didn't know he couldn't read. He was afraid to attend local classes and couldn't go to the library for fear his friends would think something was very wrong because he never was seen in the library. After several minutes discussion we determined the only place where he could possibly be tutored was a local tavern. With the help of a local community program we identified a volunteer to meet him in the back room of his favorite tavern, and for nine months he drank a little less beer and learned to read. We need more programs in the back of local taverns, local fire stations, hardware stores, schools, libraries, and hospitals. By addressing this problem in new and innovative ways, it will be possible for more individuals like my friend from Washington to learn how to read.

Mr. SIMON. Thank you.

Melissa Forinash Buckingham from the Free Library of Philadelphia.

STATEMENT OF MELISSA FORINASH BUCKINGHAM, READER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, FREE LIBRARY OF PHILADELPHIA

Ms. BUCKINGHAM. I want to give you a little background on the program with which I work before I tell you what I think the answers may be. I am head of the reader development program at the Free Library of Philadelphia, and I am also a member of the board of the public library association, which is a division of the American Library Association.

I am sure you know that public libraries from their beginnings in the 1930's have considered their role to be educational.

Given impetus by such legislation as the Library Services and Construction Act, in the 1960's many libraries instituted demonstration projects to serve low-reading-level adults. The reader development program of the Free Library of Philadelphia is one such program. Begun with a 6-month LSCA grant in July 1967, RDP continued to receive Federal funds until December 1969.

Total LSCA support during that 30-month period amounted to \$270,000. These funds paid for demonstration and circulating collections and a staff of three librarians and five nonprofessionals.

Presently, with an allocation from the free library's materials budget, and with significant support from other free library departments, the reader development program staff of two furnishes the two basic services it was created to provide: First, materials written on or below an eighth grade reading level distributed to agencies that serve low-reading-level adults and young adults in Philadelphia; and second, evaluative information about those materials to educators and librarians in Philadelphia and across the Nation.

We provide books by locating, selecting, and purchasing materials for use by other agencies. Between July 1981 and June 1982 we served 90 Philadelphia agencies. These included adult education classes and tutoring programs, community health centers, drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs, prison and probation programs, vocational training centers, English as a second language programs, and summer programs for youth.

We provide information about materials not only to our Philadelphia users, but also to librarians and educators throughout the United States by means of our publications. These publications are a direct result of the program's origins as a demonstration project, requiring dissemination of program results.

The free library took this responsibility seriously, and the reader development program not only retained but improved its program of evaluation of literacy materials after funding was assumed by the city of Philadelphia. Information is provided through:

One, PIVOT, the quarterly newsletter of the reader development program, which is sent to 1,000 readers in 41 States and the District of Columbia, 6 Canadian Provinces, 5 Australian States and Territories, and 8 other countries around the world.

Two, a quarterly book review in "Booklist," the American Library Association review journal, which has a circulation of over 30,000 and goes to public, school, and academic libraries. As far as we know, this is the only regularly published source devoted exclusively to low-reading-level materials and adults.

Three, an annotated, graded bibliography of the RDP collection, now in its third published edition—there were two prior mimeographed editions.

We are grateful to the Congress for enabling the Free Library of Philadelphia to make this kind of contribution. Given the impetus of 2½ years of LSCA funding, the library has maintained, over a period of 15 years, its commitment to a strong literacy effort, despite significant budgetary crises at the local level, a cutback in RDP staff of 75 percent, and cuts in the total library staff of 26 percent.

You will note that I have not mentioned tutoring or classes. The free library has never had sufficient funding to expand our literacy service into tutorial programs or classes for adults. We have learned through other short-term grants for such programs that they cost more than most libraries can afford when the time comes to take over the funding.

The free library has chosen primarily to assist and cooperate with already-existing local agencies. For example, the board of education of Philadelphia provides adult basic education and high school equivalency classes in 20 of our 50 branch libraries.

But there are unmet needs and most local agencies are struggling with their own setbacks in funding. Thousands of Philadelphians need 1-to-1 tutoring, or adult basic education classes, or placement service, or counseling, but existing programs have long waiting lists. And although the eligibility for funding programs such as the Adult Education Act has been liberalized to allow libraries and other community organizations to apply for funding. The funds themselves have been reduced.

Moreover, local education agencies in many communities like Philadelphia are already receiving the maximum allotment of such funds. It would be foolish, indeed, for us to compete for this money with the very agencies with which we are trying to cooperate.

We need a source of continuing funding for literacy programs, funding that includes training and dissemination components. The Coalition for Literacy, a joint proposal of the Advertising Council and the American Library Association, could provide a network that would foster communication among national educational organizations.

A training program such as the one funded by the Lilly Endowment in 1978 and 1979 and conducted by the American Library Association could also be instituted nationwide. In three regional

workshops, this program trained 123 librarians in the techniques needed to operate effective literacy programs and to replicate the training program at the local level.

A nationwide attack on illiteracy demands:

One, funding to provide continuous literacy programming, without a complicated grant process that requires extensive administrative personnel.

Two, and very significantly, a commitment from the Congress to make literacy a top priority so that State and local governments, and State departments of education and State library agencies, will follow this lead as they, in turn, set priorities.

Three, funds to disseminate the expertise developed by the Free Library of Philadelphia as well as other libraries in Baltimore, Md.; Bloomington, Ind.; Cleveland, and Cuyahoga County, Ohio; Allegheny County, Pa.; Garland, Tex.; Westchester County, N.Y.; and other libraries across the United States.

Four, a coalition of agencies with experience in working with adult illiterates, including the American Library Association; the Appalachian Adult Education Center in Morehead, Ky.; and both Laubach Literacy and Literacy Volunteers of America in Syracuse, N.Y.

Libraries have demonstrated they can cooperate with other educational programs, plan and implement effective programs, recruit program participants, and evaluate progress. I can assure you that the interest in literacy programming is evident not just in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and other cities whose programs you know about, but also in libraries across the country. With a national commitment by Congress and a strong funding base, I am confident that libraries and other educational institutions can reverse the growth of illiteracy.

Thank you, Representative Simon and other members of the committee, for this opportunity to speak to you.

Mr. ERDAHL. Thank you very much, Ms. Buckingham.

[Prepared statement of Melissa Forinash Buckingham follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MELISSA FORINASH BUCKINGHAM, READER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, FREE LIBRARY OF PHILADELPHIA

My Name is Melissa Buckingham. I am head of the Reader Development Program at the Free Library of Philadelphia, and a member of the Board of the Public Library Association, a division of the American Library Association.

Public libraries from their beginnings in the 1830's have considered their role to be educational. Given impetus by such legislation as the Library Services and Construction Act, in the 1960's many libraries instituted demonstration projects to serve low reading level adults. The Reader Development Program of the Free Library of Philadelphia is one such program. Begun with a 6-month LSCA grant in July, 1967, RDP continued to receive federal funds until December, 1969. Total LSCA support during that 30-month period amounted to \$270,000. These funds paid for demonstration and circulating collections and a staff of 3 librarians and 5 non-professionals.

Presently, with an allocation from the Free Library's materials budget, and with significant support from other Free Library departments, the Reader Development Program staff of two furnishes the two basic services it was created to provide: first, materials written on or below an eighth grade reading level distributed to agencies that serve low reading level adults and young adults in Philadelphia; and secondly, evaluative information about those materials to educators and librarians in Philadelphia and across the nation.

We provide books by locating, selecting, and purchasing materials for use by other agencies. Between July, 1981 and June, 1982 we served 90 Philadelphia agencies. These included adult education classes and tutoring programs, community health

centers, drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs, prison and probation programs, vocational training centers, English as a second language programs, and summer programs for youth.

We provide information about materials not only to our Philadelphia borrowers, but also to librarians and educators throughout the United States by means of our publications. These publications are a direct result of the program's origins as a demonstration project, requiring dissemination of program results. The Free Library took this responsibility seriously, and the Reader Development Program not only retained but improved its program of evaluation of literacy materials after funding was assumed by the City of Philadelphia. Information is provided through:

1. PIVOT, the quarterly newsletter of the Reader Development Program, which is sent to 1,000 readers in 41 states and the District of Columbia, 6 Canadian provinces, 5 Australian states and territories, and 8 other countries around the world.

2. a quarterly book review in Booklist, the American Library Association review journal, which has a circulation of over 30,000 and goes to public, school, and academic libraries. As far as we know, this is the only regularly published source devoted exclusively to low reading level materials for adults.

3. an annotated, graded bibliography of the RDP collection now in its 3rd published edition (There were two prior mimeographed editions.)

We are grateful to the Congress for enabling the Free Library of Philadelphia to make this kind of contribution. Given the impetus of 2½ years of LSCA funding, the library has maintained, over a period of 15 years, its commitment to a strong literacy effort, despite significant budgetary crises at the local level, a cutback in RDP staff of 75 percent, and cuts in the total library staff of 26 percent.

You will note that I have not mentioned tutoring or classes. The Free Library has never had sufficient funding to expand our literacy service into tutorial programs or classes for adults. We have learned through short-term grants for such programs that they cost more than most libraries can afford when the time comes to take over the funding. The Free Library has chosen primarily to assist and cooperate with already-existing local agencies. For example, the Board of Education provides adult basic education and high school equivalency classes in 20 of our 50 branch libraries. But there are unmet needs and most local agencies are struggling with their own setbacks in funding. Thousands of Philadelphians need one-to-one tutoring, or adult basic education classes, or placement service, or counseling, but existing programs have long waiting lists. And although the eligibility for funding programs such as the Adult Education Act has been liberalized to allow libraries and other community organizations to apply for funding, the funds themselves have been reduced. Moreover, local education agencies in many communities are already receiving the maximum allotment of such funds. It would be foolish, indeed, for us to compete for this money with the very agencies with which we are trying to cooperate.

We need a source of continuing funding for literacy programs, funding that includes training and dissemination components. The Coalition for Literacy, a joint proposal of the Advertising Council and the American Library Association, could provide a network that would foster communication among national educational organizations. A training program such as the one funded by the Lilly Endowment in 1978 and 1979 and conducted by the American Library Association could also be instituted nationwide. In three regional workshops, this program trained 123 librarians in the techniques needed to operate effective literacy programs and to replicate the training program at the local level.

A nationwide attack on illiteracy demands:

1. Funding to provide continuous literacy programming, without a complicated grant process that requires extensive administrative personnel.

2. A commitment from the Congress to make literacy a top priority so that state and local governments, and state departments of education and state library agencies, will follow this lead as they, in turn, set priorities.

3. Funds to disseminate the expertise developed by the Free Library of Philadelphia as well as other libraries in Baltimore, MD; Bloomington, IN; Cleveland and Cuyahoga County, OH; Allegheny County, PA; Garland, TX; Westchester County, NY; and other libraries across the United States.

4. A coalition of agencies with experience in working with adult illiterates, including the American Library Association; the Appalachian Adult Education Center in Morehead, KY; and both Laubach Literacy and Literacy Volunteers of America in Syracuse, NY.

Libraries have demonstrated they can cooperate with other educational programs, plan and implement effective programs, recruit program participants, and evaluate progress. I can assure you that the interest in literacy programming is evident not just in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and other cities whose programs you know

about, but also in libraries across the country. With a national commitment by Congress and a strong funding base, I am confident that libraries and other educational institutions can reverse the growth of illiteracy.

Thank your, Representative Simon and other members of the committee for this opportunity to speak to you.

Mr. ERDAHL. Mr. Garza, please proceed. You may read your statement or summarize it, as you feel most comfortable with. There will be no objection to the entire statement being included in our record.

**STATEMENT OF FRANCISCO GARZA, LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR,
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LaRAZA, ALSO REPRESENTING THE
HISPANIC HIGHER EDUCATION COALITION**

Mr. GARZA. Thank you very much. I have got some general comments I want to emphasize this morning. I would like to submit the written comments for the record, more formal written comments.

Mr. ERDAHL. Without objection, they will be included in the record.

Mr. GARZA. Thank you very much.

First of all, I would like to say I appreciate the invitation of the subcommittee, your leadership, for inviting us on behalf of the National Council of LaRaza to present our analysis of what the problem is especially as it faces Hispanics. The high rate of illiteracy among Hispanics is of really great concern to Hispanic organizations concerned with equal educational opportunities.

Substantial numbers of Hispanic Americans are unable to complete school or effectively compete for jobs because of less than adequate literacy in English. Illiteracy is a problem which is difficult to quantify and deal with, because of insufficient data and the poor definition of illiteracy which is routinely deplored.

Basically, as my comments will emphasize, we have got a definitional problem which pertains to the whole problem area to begin with. Illiteracy is conventionally defined as the failure to complete more than 5 years of elementary school.

Using that criteria, the Department of Education estimates that approximately one in five adults is functionally illiterate. Using the same definition for Hispanics, Hispanics are much more likely than whites to be classified as functionally illiterate because the school retention and completion rates are so much lower for Hispanics than for whites.

According to the current population survey, in 1980, 17.8 percent of Hispanics 25 years and older completed less than 5 years of elementary school, as compared to 2.9 percent of whites. Even with the broader definition of illiteracy as was done at the University of Texas at Austin, the adult performance level project which defined literacy on practical criteria such as ability to interpret a bus schedule, understanding of printed explanation of finance charges, or addressing a letter that would reach its destination, according to a practical criteria in defining illiteracy this survey found that 56 percent of Hispanics in the country were classified as functionally illiterate compared to 44 percent of blacks and 16 percent of whites.

We emphasize that language background is very strongly related to school completion and literacy. It is especially true for His-

panics. Hispanics with a non-English background are almost as likely as whites to complete high school. However, Hispanics with a non-English background, whether or not they usually speak Spanish, are more likely than whites to drop out of school.

It is significant that a non-English language background independent of language usage influences students' performance in school. This indicates the definitions of English proficiency which concentrates solely on speaking ability are inadequate to truly measure a degree of proficiency a student has in English.

A better definition perhaps of English proficiency should be based on the ability to speak, read, write and understand English, and being able to master a variety of skills in the language.

It is unfortunate that many studies and surveys purporting to count the number of limited English-proficient children relies solely on the oral language capability.

In most cases it is a third party who reports on the child's proficiency in the language. However, these measures are very inadequate, because speaking ability by itself as a judge of literacy or proficiency is a poor judgment because whether or not a student speaks something orally is a far cry from being able to be functionally literate and proficient in writing and mastery of a wide variety of skills.

Recent research shows that automatic oral shift for non-English student background does occur during the school years. However, there is a corresponding shift that doesn't occur for written skills. What we do know about literacy is that persons who are literate and have strong language skills in their native language are more likely to become fully proficient and literate in English. There is a strong correlation between the degree of proficiency in the native language and the second language.

Our entire definition of literacy needs to be reworked. It is inadequate for the general population and does not come close to describing the condition of the Hispanics either. To define literacy as simply the completion of the fifth grade ignores the changing demands of life in the United States and the tremendous variation among types of illiterates. Such a simplistic definition misclassifies those who may have left school but are still literate, those who managed to complete school but are functionally illiterate and those who are literate in another language but not yet proficient in English.

This last group of individuals are not illiterate, they are simply monolingual and their needs are different, and different programs have to address those needs.

Many of the language barriers facing Hispanics are not the same as those faced by illiterate mono-English speakers.

As previously mentioned, many Hispanics are literate in Spanish but are limited in their English proficiency. Other Hispanics have never had the opportunity to develop literacy or strong language skills in either language. This group faces all the problems of monolingual English illiterates, plus the added problems of language interference and limited proficiency in English.

Other Hispanics with limited ability to read and write effectively in English have never had the opportunity. The group faces all the problems of monolingual English illiterates plus the problem of

language interference and limited proficiency in English. Other Hispanics with limited ability to read and write effectively in English are products of our own public schools which have concentrated mainly on oral English skill ability, have neglected to teach comprehension, reading or writing.

The low levels of education decrease the earning power of youth and adults. The Department of Education estimates that Americans who have not completed high school earn only two-thirds the salary of those with high school diplomas. In addition to the low levels of formal schooling, recent reports by the National Commission for Employment Policy finds that a lack of full proficiency in English also is an important barrier for Hispanics in the labor market.

Any recommendations on addressing the problem of illiteracy really has to go into further analysis of the issue, and for Hispanics, because of the lack of data, there has got to be more data and more analysis to be able to grapple with some solutions to it.

The whole issue of literacy and proficiency in a second language needs more attention. As mentioned, we need to devise more comprehensive and appropriate definition, one which ties literacy to proficiency, language proficiency and cognition and skill abilities, and we need to link the whole issue of access to quality education to the whole problem of literacy.

Finally, programs designed to educate Hispanics with non-English language backgrounds must be designed to help children become fully proficient in the English language, and not merely speaking in the language, but fully literate and master of all the skills, all the language skills.

In closing, I would like to reemphasize a point that was made by the first witness on the panel. In terms of solutions, we would really recommend usage of the community-based approach, alternative educational programs. The council, in our experience, we have hundreds of affiliate organizations at the local level, in which they are able to reach out to serve people, the dropouts, the people who do not complete school, and we are trying to pass the word down to our affiliates at the local level that they need to address this problem and come up with different types of programs in reaching out to the kids who are not finishing school. I think the Government would be wise in devising programs which maximize that resource that exists out there, the whole network of community-based organizations.

[The prepared statement of Francisco Garza follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF FRANCISCO GARZA, LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR, THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LaRAZA, AND THE HISPANIC HIGHER EDUCATION COALITION

The National Council of LaRaza and the Hispanic Higher Education Coalition appreciate the invitation to deliver testimony on the problem of illiteracy in the Hispanic community. The high rate of illiteracy among Hispanics is a great concern to Hispanic organizations concerned with equal educational opportunity.

Substantial numbers of Hispanic Americans are unable to complete school or effectively compete for jobs because of less than adequate literacy in English. Illiteracy is a problem which is difficult to quantify and deal with because of insufficient data and the poor definitions of illiteracy which are routinely employed.

Illiteracy is conventionally defined as the failure to complete more than five years of elementary school. Using that criteria, the Department of Education has estimated that approximately one in five adults is functionally illiterate. When school com-

pletion rates are used to define illiteracy, Hispanics are much more likely than Whites to be classified as functionally illiterate because the school retention and completion rates are so much lower for Hispanics than for Whites.

According to the 1980 Current Population Survey report on educational attainment in the United States, 17.8 percent of Hispanics 25 years old and over has completed less than five years of elementary school as compared to 2.89 percent of Whites. Non-metro Hispanics are especially likely to be classified as illiterate (26 percent as compared to 3 percent for non-metro Whites). According to the 1979 CPS report "Persons of Spanish Origin in the United States," Mexican Americans have the higher rates of functional illiteracy of all Hispanics (23.1 percent), followed by Puerto Ricans (15 percent), Cubans (9.3 percent) and other Hispanics (5.9 percent).

Even when a broader definition of illiteracy is employed, Hispanics do not fear well. The Adult Performance Level Project at the University of Texas at Austin which defined literacy on such practical criteria as ability to interpret a bus schedule, understand a printed explanation of finance charges or address a letter so that it would reach its destination, found that fully 56 percent of Hispanics in this country could be classified as functionally illiterate, as compared to 47 percent of Blacks and 16 percent of Whites.

Language background is strongly related to school completion, and literacy. This is especially true for Hispanics. Hispanics with a mono-English background are almost as likely as Whites to complete high school; however, Hispanics with a non-English language background, whether or not they usually speak Spanish, are more likely than Whites to drop out of school, according to the 1976 Survey of Income and Education.

It is significant that a non-English language background, independent of whether or not individuals usually speak English, influences a student's performance in school. This indicates that definitions of English proficiency which concentrate solely on speaking ability are inadequate to truly measure the degree of proficiency a student has in English. A definition of English proficiency which is based on ability to speak, read, write and understand English is more comprehensive, since it is based on a variety of skills, including those associated with literacy.

It is unfortunate that many studies and surveys purporting to count the number of limited English proficient children rely solely on oral language capabilities. An additional problem is that in most cases it is a third party who reports on the child's proficiency. The 1980 Census used a measure of this type. The Children's English and Services Study discovered in 1978 that third party reports of a child's English speaking ability did not necessarily reflect a child's proficiency in English. Fully 72 percent of children identified as speaking very well or well, were in fact, limited in English proficiency when given a comprehensive test for proficiency. Thus, merely measuring English speaking skills does not measure full English proficiency and ignores the question of literacy.

Educational programs which focus only on producing children who speak English do not promote full English proficiency and may in part be responsible for the high rates of functional illiteracy in the Hispanic community. Recent research shows that there is an automatic oral language shift which occurs for monolingual Spanish speakers during elementary school. Unless children are living in highly isolated or segregated areas, children will become predominantly English speaking and lose most of their ability to speak Spanish. This occurs even where there are no special language programs in schools. Language retention for Hispanic children in integrated areas is not substantially greater than for any other group of language minority children. The fact that Hispanics are the most segregated group of children within the public schools may be responsible for slowing down that shift, but the oral language shift does occur.

There is not necessarily, however, a corresponding shift in written language. What we do know about literacy is that persons who are literate and have strong language skills in their native language are more likely to become fully proficient and literate in English. There is a strong correlation between the degree of proficiency in the native language and the second language. Therefore, when children do not have a chance to develop strong skills in their first language their chances for becoming fully proficient in their second language are diminished. For many children, the absence of this opportunity has resulted in illiteracy in both languages. If we want Hispanic children to become fully literate in English, we have to teach reading and writing. It will not automatically "happen."

Our entire definition of illiteracy needs to be reworked. It is inadequate for the general population and does not come close to describing the educational condition of Hispanics in the United States. To define literacy as simply the completion of the fifth grade ignores the changing demands of life in the United States and the tre-

mendous variation among types of "illiterates". Such a simplistic definition misclassifies those who may have left school but are still literate, those who managed to complete school but are functionally illiterate and those who are literate in another language but not yet proficient in English. This last group of individuals are not illiterate, they are simply monolingual and they have different needs. Programs designed to address illiteracy must respond to the specific needs of different types of "illiterates". For some "illiterates" there are a number of other unmet needs that are basic for survival. Literacy alone cannot erase the poverty and "marginalization" which are a part of the lives of many illiterates. Our present definition of literacy is both out-moded from a technological perspective and inadequate to help us design programs to address the needs of a variety of different types of illiterates.

Many of the language barriers faced by Hispanics are not the same as those faced by illiterate monolingual English speakers. As previously mentioned, many Hispanics are literate in Spanish but are limited in their English proficiency. Other Hispanics have never had the opportunity to develop literacy or strong language skills in either language. This group faces all the problems of monolingual English illiterates, plus the added problems of language interference and limited proficiency in English. Other Hispanics with limited ability to read and write effectively in English are products of our own public schools which have concentrated mainly an *oral* English skills and have neglected to teach comprehension, reading or writing. This last group of children have been provided with an inadequately designed education and their illiteracy has, in fact, been created by the schools.

The outcomes of inadequate levels of English literacy and proficiency are profound. Because such a high proportion of Hispanics over 25 years old are "functionally illiterate," they cannot provide their children with the early home reading experiences which have been closely linked with children's later ability to read. Illiteracy and lack of full proficiency in English influence a student's ability to keep up with his or her classmates, and many Hispanics do, in fact, fall behind with each year they remain in school. Being over-age and behind grade level contributes to the disproportionately high rate of Hispanic dropouts. These low levels of education decrease the earning power of youth and adults. The Department of Education estimates that Americans who have not completed high school earn only two-thirds the salary of those with high school diplomas. In addition to the low levels of formal schooling, a recent report by the National Commission for Employment Policy found that lack of full proficiency in English was perhaps the most important barrier for Hispanics in the labor market. Limited literacy also affects an individual's ability to enter the armed services, since recruits with less than a fifth grade reading ability are currently not accepted. In summary, inadequate reading skills hamper Hispanics in all areas of life.

Any recommendations for addressing the problems of illiteracy in the Hispanic community must begin with the call for further analysis. We simply do not know enough about the unique situation of Hispanics. The whole issue of literacy and proficiency in a second language needs more attention. As previously mentioned, we need to devise a more comprehensive and appropriate definition of illiteracy if we are to adequately describe the situation of Hispanic Americans. Any program created to educate Hispanics with non-English language backgrounds must be designed to help children become fully proficient in the English language—that is, not merely English speaking, but fully literate as well. Finally, community-based organizations have an important contribution to make in combating the problem of illiteracy and, especially for out-of-school youth and adults, are perhaps the most effective providers of literacy programs.

Mr. SIMON. We thank you. Unfortunately, we have a rolloff right now. We will have to take a recess if you do not mind waiting for about 10 minutes until we come back. We will have some questions for you at that point.

Thank you.

[Recess.]

Mr. SIMON. The subcommittee will resume its hearing.

I appreciate what all three of you have contributed here. I was interested, Mr. Garza, in your comments. What you are really saying is that illiteracy in the Hispanic community is probably exaggerated. That is not the only thing you are saying.

Mr. GARZA. Not exaggerated.

Mr. SIMON. Because we test on the basis of English skills, statistics on the illiteracy there is probably not quite as great as has been suggested.

Mr. GARZA. The measurements are totally inadequate, because like I said the conventional definition is fifth grade completion. We know statistics tell us that Hispanics have lesser school retention, school completion rates than other communities, and so on that aspect that is one wrinkle that gets into that problem, the definition. As the testimony pointed out, as you said, it is tied very much to the speaking ability. Some people who come into the school system may be literate in their native language, but because of the fact that they have not mastered a second language, English, those people are going to be classified as illiterate and they are really not. It is just that they come into the classroom with a whole different set of needs, that the programing needs to address.

Mr. SIMON. What you touch on is one aspect of the whole. We toss out a great many statistics. I am not at all sure, not simply in the Hispanic area but in any of these areas, that we are on very solid ground. What we do know, however, is that we have a problem of massive dimensions.

Mr. GARZA. Yes.

Mr. SIMON. And that it needs analysis. For example, in the Hispanic community, we face very different problems in the Cuban community, in the Mexican community, and in the Puerto Rican community.

Mr. GARZA. That is right.

Mr. SIMON. Let me ask this question. Let me just toss out one for, for example, Mr. Waite, the excellent work your group is doing on a voluntary basis, reaching 60,000 people. That is roughly two-tenths of 1 percent of the problem. All three of you are in agreement that we need a community-based program. Is there some way at the Federal level we can encourage this? I have even thought, for example, of introducing legislation to have an Assistant Secretary of Education for Illiteracy, who then could not simply have a name but in some way move. How do we encourage this community-based program, so that we reach more than two-tenths of 1 percent of the population?

Mr. WAITE. I think there are two ways to go and we are at a fork in the road, particularly at the national level. I think that Congress can choose to take national leadership, and that would be going down the road similar to what you have suggested. That is to establish some effective focal point for the issue of literacy, and making it a national issue and making that position a prod, a national prod that continues to push, focus, and demand that regulations and existing laws and new laws reflect a serious problem. That would be I think a very positive and a very significant step.

The second step would be to reflect the dollars at the Federal level so that they can indeed look at alternative service delivery systems, and the establishment of those systems, and the development of again new programs, model programs to take into consideration the size of the problem, and seriously address it, and also alternative ways, including community-based programs, massive volunteers, and some of the links that we talked about.

Mr. SIMON. If I may ask all three of you the same question.

Ms. BUCKINGHAM. I think there has been in the past in many communities a kind of a struggle between the volunteer programs and the federally funded programs such as those funded under the Adult Education Act. I think the most important thing we can do at the community level is to get all those segments working together, and that is not always easy to do from the Federal point of view.

I know that there just does not seem to be money around to do much of anything. I mean we cannot keep people warm and fed this winter, let alone make them learn how to read. I think if there were one single thing that could be done at the Federal level, maybe the dissemination of what we already know, because there are lots of programs that really know how to approach this problem, and there are lots of other people starting and trying to learn the same thing all over again, so that in fact we are reinventing the whole time after time.

I think the first place where we need leadership is dissemination of information about which we already know.

Mr. SIMON. Let me just have one more minor disagreement, when you say there is not money available. In fact, the question is whether this is a priority or not. We seem to have money available for an MX missile. We seem to have money available for a great many other things. Is this the kind of an issue that ought to be a national priority? I think that is the question.

Ms. BUCKINGHAM. You bet it is.

Mr. SIMON. Yes, really, and even from the viewpoint of pure dollars and cents, forgetting humanitarian considerations entirely, just from the matter of dollars and cents what we contribute to the economy of this Nation, this is a problem we cannot continue to ignore.

Mr. GARZA. I do not think you would be solving anything by creating an Assistant Secretary of Illiteracy, or going to the traditional bureaucratic Federal Washington dictating the policy. I think it has got to be a ground swell. It has got to be a national priority. It has got to be felt at the grassroots in order for it to be effective.

Mr. SIMON. But for it to be effective it seems to me there has to be some leadership. For example, the very kind of research that you are talking about that is needed.

Mr. GARZA. Exactly.

Mr. SIMON. That clearly is needed, somebody has to be providing leadership on that research.

Mr. GARZA. What I was going to say is not through the traditional bureaucracy, but perhaps some kind of task force which takes from industry, takes educators, community-based people, community-based organization people, and into a large body, whether you call it a task force or what not, and start channeling some moneys into research and devising alternative programs and systems for addressing that problem, and give it the same kind of high priority as the drug problem or whatever, because it is a big problem. Our own national defense is at stake in many respects.

I think if we can elevate it to as high a priority as we can, I think we will be doing a great service in trying to reduce the problem.

Mr. SIMON. Thank you.

Mr. Erdahl.

Mr. ERDAHL. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of very broad questions to begin with, perhaps.

Are we talking primarily about adult education? Are we talking about education also in the traditional classroom sense, because it seems obvious as the adults who cannot read are either children from this country who cannot read, or immigrants or people from another culture or background who do not learn English, or did not learn English.

Mr. GARZA. It is a good question. Let me just respond in one way. Many times, especially the public view of Hispanics in the country, and certainly in the educational realm, one thing that always affects our situation is the fact that we are looked at entirely as an immigrant population, and one thing that time and time again people fail to realize is that we have been here ever since the beginning of the country, and our community has been very much hurt by the lack of educational opportunity. Congress has acted to affirm those rights and what not, but the fact of the matter exists that our adult population is very much still victimized because of their experience in our school system, so what I am saying is that we have inherited this problem and that, yes, the adult education is still part of the problem, but it is also the traditional schooling programs and what not, so it is both, but it is not just because it is an immigrant problem or because that is causing it.

Mr. ERDAHL. If I could just follow up on that, in this publication "Libraries and Literacy" by the American Library Association Office of Library Outreach Services, an incredible figure to me at least, it says of the 54.3 million persons age 16 and under in 1970 who are not enrolled in school, and it goes on. Can that really be right? Are there 54.3 million people under 16 in this country who are not enrolled in school?

Ms. BUCKINGHAM. Sure. When I was a librarian in an inner city library in Philadelphia, two blocks down the street there was a public school at which the average daily attendance was 40 percent.

Mr. ERDAHL. It seems to me, as Mr. Simon, our chairman, mentioned, that while we certainly have to have the communities involved in it, it strikes me that this must be an area of national priority that we have, and maybe I am provincial and self-righteous coming from Minnesota, but at least we have requirements that you have to stay in school until you are age 16 or have completed school.

Ms. BUCKINGHAM. If people know you are there in the first place.

Mr. ERDAHL. Pardon?

Ms. BUCKINGHAM. If people know the kid is there in the first place, but I am sure there are plenty of people, probably urban areas and very rural areas are the places where this happens most, and not in the suburban areas or in small towns, but there are plenty of kids that the school authorities do not even know about.

Mr. SIMON. I think the figure is a little deceptive, not purposely deceptive, but they include in that 54 million those who have less than a high school education in the population. It is not simply the under-16 population.

Mr. ERDAHL. OK.

Mr. SIMON. That makes a little more sense.

Mr. ERDAHL. When you read the whole sentence. I thank you, Paul, for that correction or clarification, but it still is an alarming figure nevertheless, and I think that the Congress as the policy-making body for this country has a real challenge to make it a priority. Again, as you said, Mr. Chairman, when you look at the question of funds being available, and I agree with you, ma'am, we have problems in this country and we will have the problem this winter of people being able to properly survive with food and heat, and yet as we have seen coming with some recommendations or requests, as Mr. Simon is aware, for our so-called security, to be spending I think the forecast equals out to \$36 million an hour for the next 5 years, then we have some priorities out of kilter, and I hope that we do not need another Sputnik or something go up to jar us loose. We must stress excellence in education, and I think we are being pennywise and pound foolish.

Again to tag on to what you said, Mr. Chairman, I think even apart from the humanitarian concern that we have to try to enable people to live full, rich, productive lives for themselves and for others, that what we spend wisely in this area is a good financial investment as well. It obviously pays us dividends over a period of time, so I think it is well that we are all here together to stress I think a priority that is not being stressed today in our country.

Mr. Waite, do you wish to comment?

Mr. WAITE. I could not agree with you more, Mr. Erdahl. I think to underscore that point, that we cannot take literacy and look at it in isolation from the school system and the educational system, it is clear that we are talking about a concept of lifelong learning. Some of these people have indeed dropped out. Some have been pushed out. The logger I mentioned in Washington, he chose to leave, and he got a very good and well-paying job, but he simply wanted to learn how to read. He was ashamed he did not know where to turn.

We are in a situation where if you are on the Titanic, it is not probably the time to start figuring out exactly why you hit the iceberg. It is time to bail, and I think that the time is to bail, and we have a critical amount of time left. I do not think that we are in a situation where we have a luxury to be able to move slowly, and I just really agree and underscore your point of making it a national priority.

Mr. ERDAHL. Mr. Chairman, just one other comment, and then maybe you have other questions or comments. It seems to me that there are two areas that become the obvious ones of stress, and that is one with adults that cannot read, and then maybe of a school at least for those that are going through the school system. I cannot believe that this logger you talked about in the State of Washington dropped out of school in the fifth or sixth grade. He might have dropped out when he got done with the eighth or ninth grade, I am guessing, or maybe the 10th grade, but by then he should know how to read. I do not believe many people forget how to read, so there is something that is out of kilter in our school system if people can survive seven or eight grades of school and not really be literate. I see you are nodding. That does not go on the record, but could you comment on that?

Ms. BUCKINGHAM. I think you are talking about creating some kind of effort that has a two-pronged approach. One is to cure, if we can, the disease of the adults, and then second, a prevention program to deal with our children.

Mr. ERDAHL. You state it better than I, but we cannot ignore those that have completed or have dropped out and are no longer in the traditional school system, but good grief, you certainly must do something to assure that people going through the system at least learn to read or are not so discouraged that they drop out.

Let me ask one other question. Mr. Garza, maybe this is a sensitive area, but let us talk about it. We have a lot of emphasis in certain parts of our society with the whole concept of bilingual education. Are we really missing the boat, and should we be stressing to have people in this country, when they come from Hispanic background as you do or a Nordic background as I do, to learn English, the language of this country?

Mr. GARZA. Yes, and you will find that we ourselves were first among those to stress that people need to be literate and functional in the English language. We do not advocate for a whole separate type nation or what not. What we are saying to our own folks is that yes, we need to be functional, because English is the language of the country, and in order to be full-fledged members of society, we need to have mastery of the English language.

What we are saying, though, is that the traditional programs and traditional approaches for getting our people to that capability have been less than adequate in getting us there, and that is why we have such dire conditions in the education of Hispanics in this country.

Mr. ERDAHL. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SIMON. If my colleague would yield.

Mr. ERDAHL. Of course.

Mr. SIMON. So what you say is not misinterpreted, you believe that bilingual programs are important.

Mr. GARZA. They are absolutely important.

Mr. SIMON. So that young people who need a helping hand are given that helping hand, not that they should not learn English.

Mr. GARZA. That is correct.

Mr. SIMON. But that we have to use the tools that they have to lift them to that next step in our society.

Mr. GARZA. The whole background to a bilingual education is exactly that, to take what the child brings to the classroom, the other language, the native language abilities, and to give the sustenance to allow them to make that transfer, that transition into the English language. You have to work with what the child brings into the classroom. That is the whole purpose. You are right. Bilingual education is absolutely important. We need to learn to do that a lot better, also, because it has not been a very good record, and we could do a lot better with it.

Mr. SIMON. We thank the three of you very, very much for your testimony.

Mr. WAITE. Thank you.

Mr. SIMON. The next witnesses are Bette Fenton and Rosalyn Stoker. Bette Fenton is the director of environmental affairs for B.

Dalton, the book people—as one who writes books, I am all in favor of booksellers—and Rosalyn Stoker, who is the senior training and educational specialist for the Polaroid Co.

Miss Fenton.

Mr. ERDAHL. Could I interrupt, and we welcome Miss Fenton, coming from Minnesota, because I am familiar with the B. Dalton bookstores. I would trust they distribute your book, Mr. Chairman. I know they distribute some that my twin brother has written, and I am pleased with that. More than that, I would make an absolute correction and the wrong information came to me. I think we used the word environment in the sense in which we live, but I understand that your proper title is the community relations and public affairs, and I just want to salute the Dayton Hudson Corp., and Dwayne Scribner from that company who is in the audience with us as well, and that B. Dalton has been a good community citizen in Minnesota, and I believe that these stores are found now in 47 States throughout the country, and I am very glad as a fellow Minnesotan to welcome Miss Fenton to us today.

Mr. SIMON. Thank you.

Miss Fenton.

**STATEMENT OF BETTE L. FENTON, DIRECTOR OF
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, B. DALTON BOOKSELLER**

Ms. FENTON. Thank you. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to review B. Dalton's efforts in addressing the literacy problem in our Nation. My remarks this morning will be a very brief summation of the prepared testimony, but I would like to request that our written testimony and a recent speech given by William Andres, chairman of the Dayton Hudson Corp., a speech at Columbia University, be entered into the record.

Mr. SIMON. Your statement will be entered in the record.

Ms. FENTON. B. Dalton Booksellers is a bookstore chain operating 664 stores in 47 States and the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. We are an operating company, the Dayton Hudson Corp., and wholeheartedly endorse our corporation's commitment to corporate social responsibility, and we uphold the corporate pledge to contribute an amount equal to 5 percent of Federal taxable income on an annual basis through our giving programs.

The overall mission of B. Dalton's community relations and public affairs efforts is to support our continued growth and overall strategic direction through programs and activities which positively impact the quality of life within our market communities, and enhance the public's understanding of B. Dalton both as a responsible and responsive corporate citizen. We view these programs as an extension of our basic business.

Today I plan to address our community giving program. As we developed the scope and emphasis of this program, our goal was to identify an issue or issues which we could significantly and positively impact through our philanthropic dollars, but more importantly, one in which our business expertise and the experience and talents of our management and employees could play a very key role.

In our research we came across some very startling statistics. A 1978 study by Yankelovich, Skelly & White for the Book Industry Study Group revealed as much as 15 percent of the total American population were nonreaders, not reading books, magazines, or newspapers.

Lack of competence was cited as a deterrence by a very high percentage of those surveyed. The 1976 Ford Foundation study brought out even more staggering data. As many as 60 million adult Americans are functionally illiterate.

The consequences of being illiterate in our society were brought home very personally to me during a recent trip to Syracuse. I was a guest on a television panel along with a woman who was a student in the Laubach project there. This woman was 42 years old, a high school graduate and the mother of two children, and yet she had never learned to read and write. Obviously she could not get a job, and was receiving AFDC. Being unable to read, she could not help her children with homework, she could not read their school notices, or even read them a bedtime story. She told how when her son brought home a school notice she would call the school and tell them my son dropped this yellow sheet in the mud puddle or ran over it with his bike or got peanut butter and jelly over it, what did this piece of paper say.

She told how she watched television religiously so she would have brand identification when she went shopping. The saddest was when she unintentionally poisoned her young daughter, giving her pink liquid soap which she mistook for Pepto Bismol. She found help through a public service announcement, PSA, on late night television. She told us she had to stay up late for 5 or 6 nights because she could only copy down one number of the telephone at this time.

I will never forget the deafening silence in that interview when the moderator asked her what were the biggest barriers that you moved through as you began to learn to read, and this woman leaned over to me and in absolute panic said, what does she mean, barriers? She was 42 years old, the mother of two children, a high school graduate, and did not know what barriers meant.

Just as shocking is the National Center for Education Statistics study results. Over 800,000 kids a year are dropping out of high school, and hundreds of thousands more are graduating without achieving basic competency skills.

What these figures mean for us as a bookseller is of grave concern, but what they mean for society is even more frightening. B. Dalton's proposal calling for a national literacy partnership project grew out of this research data and the findings from our extensive field work with community-based literacy projects since 1977. The strategic plan for this national effort was developed during the very comprehensive 14-month assessment period. From this assessment we reached several conclusions:

One, communication and coordination between existing National, State, and local programs is a critical need.

Two, National, State, and local networking frameworks are essential in order for that coordination to take place between public and private programs, and between programs and potential re-

sources. New approaches to service delivery and new teaching techniques are a necessity.

Most importantly, public awareness of the magnitude of the problem has to clearly be our first step.

At B. Dalton we have made literacy the primary focus of our giving programs. In 1982 alone nearly a quarter of a million dollars will be invested in literacy projects in 15 State organizations and over 100 community-based projects.

Particular emphasis is being placed on model projects which are addressing long-range planning and management training, and are exploring new approaches to providing services. We firmly believe that public education programs, public libraries, private organizations, business and individuals can and must join forces.

B. Dalton has joined with the American Library Association and others in the Coalition for Literacy to launch a national awareness campaign. We have joined with Laubach Literacy Action, Literacy Volunteers of America, and ACTION, a Federal agency, to develop, field test, and provide a management training program for volunteer organizations.

Model programs which can be replicable in other communities have been identified or initiated, and additional partners from within the private and corporate sectors are being actively sought.

As a leader in our own industry we strongly believe that we have a responsibility to encourage the involvement of other booksellers and the publishing industry in this effort, and the Association of American Publishers has already pledged us their full support.

The identification of volunteers as the key component in delivering services to people who cannot read has initiated the most important step that B. Dalton has taken. We have begun an all-out campaign to mobilize the 8,500 B. Dalton employees nationwide to encourage them to become individual tutors and community leaders in developing and supporting local literacy projects in their home communities. In our Minneapolis headquarters we offer time off from work for training to become a tutor, and we purchase training and tutoring materials for any employee willing to help those that cannot read.

Even though the program is only a few months old, the response of our employees has been absolutely overwhelming. At our headquarters I even have a waiting list for our next training session.

What is especially heartening is that our people at all levels have become actively involved in tutoring and other aspects of our literacy efforts, everyone from sales clerks to the maintenance man at our corporate headquarters, to our store managers, regional managers, vice presidents, presidents—all the way up to our CEO.

I personally can attest that volunteering as a literacy tutor is a phenomenal personal experience, giving the volunteer much more of a reward than the student. I am a volunteer tutor, and my student is a 36-year-old high school graduate who has been a mail carrier for 14 years in a small suburban Minneapolis community. She managed to get by because she delivered the mail in her own neighborhood. She had grown up in that neighborhood and knew everyone who lived there, and was always aware of anyone that moved in. She had learned to match up cursive writing with the

names and addresses of the people on her route and the key points in her town.

When the decision was made to merge several ZIP codes, her route changed, and she was found out. Obviously she had not really gone undetected. She would go to any length to avoid having to sort the mail, so she would volunteer for all the yucky jobs around the post office, and have someone else do the sorting for her. When her job was threatened, she finally came forward and asked for help.

She was so incredibly eager to learn and she wanted to have lessons every day, even though that was impossible for me. She caught on very quickly and progressed through all of the reading materials and then went on to learn grammar and punctuation and letter writing. I will never forget the thrill that I felt when we drove through the community and she could read all the street signs all by herself, when she got her very own checking account and was able to go shopping. For me it was the same relation that I felt when I had my children. I gave her a new life. She had a new beginning.

On behalf of B. Dalton Bookseller and the Dayton Hudson Corp., I extend our sincere hope that we can continue to work together with your committee to define appropriate public policy to deal with illiteracy. We truly believe that effective public-private partnership can be developed. Now more than ever we are all aware that neither the private sector nor the public sector can go it alone. It will only be through joint efforts, the sharing of expertise, complemented by the contributions of volunteers, that we are going to realize the solution to this problem.

[Prepared statement of Bette L. Fenton follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BETTE FENTON, DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS, B. DALTON BOOKSELLER, MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

B. Dalton Bookseller is a retail bookstore chain operating 664 stores in 47 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. As an operating company of Dayton Hudson Corporation, B. Dalton fully supports and actively participates in the Corporation's commitment to community involvement and national leadership in corporate responsibility programs, with a major emphasis on corporate philanthropy. We uphold the Corporation's pledge to budget an amount equal to 5% of Federal taxable income annually to support our Giving Programs.

The overall mission and strategic plans adopted for B. Dalton's Community Relations and Public Affairs programs are to support our company's continued growth, performance, and strategic direction through programs and activities which preserve and broaden our customer base; positively impact the quality of life within our market communities; help secure continued economic prosperity; and enhance the public's understanding of B. Dalton as a responsible and responsive corporate citizen.

We view these programs as an extension of our basic business philosophy, enhancing our company's growth and profit potential.

As a national company with expansion plans calling for over 1,000 stores and a geographic spread across all 50 states by 1986, we realized we needed to closely define the scope and emphasis of our Giving Programs.

We began to research national issues having a major impact on our employees, our customers, our communities, and our business. Our goal was to identify an issue or issues which we could significantly and positively impact through our philanthropic dollars. But, more importantly, one in which our business expertise and the experience and talents of our management and employees could play a key role.

We came across some startling statistics in our research and I would like to share them with you.

A 1978 study by Yankelovich, Skelly and White for the Book Industry Study Group (BISG) had revealed that as many as 15 percent of the total American population were nonreaders—they do not read books, magazines or newspapers.

People who do not read represented the least privileged group in the nation. 22 percent were black, 33 percent did not go beyond the 8th grade, and 43 percent had annual family incomes under \$10,000. 60 percent of this group said they had never read books, magazines or newspapers voluntarily. Lack of competence was cited as a deterrent by a high percentage of those surveyed.

A 1976 study commissioned by the Ford Foundation brought out even more staggering data. The study found as many as 23 million illiterate adults in the United States—23 million adults who could not read or write well enough to fill out a job application, decipher signs or labels.

More shocking still was the revelation that some 54-64 million adults were functionally illiterate—lacking the skills necessary to fulfill their roles as family and community members, as citizens, consumers, and job holders. Over 60 million native-born Americans were unable to read well enough to deal with society's demands, and lacked the ability to solve everyday problems * * * an appalling number if only approximately accurate.

And even more tragic was the information released early this year by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Over 800,000 kids drop out of high school and hundreds of thousands more graduate without achieving basic competency skills.

The study highlighted in Nations Business (November 1982) reported a steady decline throughout the 1970's in the already low skill levels of American students in reading, writing, math and science.

What those figures meant for us as a bookseller was of grave concern. But what they meant for society was even more frightening. Illiteracy was now identified as the "root cause" for many social problems directly affecting the total climate and health of our communities.

B. Dalton's commitment to improving the level of literacy has taken a dual thrust. Through our expansion, we are bringing more books to more people. As an extension of that basic commitment, we have put our charitable dollars to work in adult literacy programs, reading programs for children and young adults, and public libraires.

Due to time limitations, I will review with you today only our adult literacy programs.

Here's the process we went through * * * we started by researching literacy projects in our headquarters community. Our work since 1977 with the Minnesota Literacy Council gave us the knowledge we needed about the issue and allowed us to expand our support to 15 states and over 100 key market communities.

Our eventual proposal for a national literacy partnership project, grew out of this research and findings from our extensive field work. The consultation services of a literacy specialist were also retained.

The strategic plan for this national effort has identified four key components to addressing the problem of illiteracy:

(1) Awareness of the illiteracy problem; (2) expanded and coordinated service delivery to the affected 60+ million adults; (3) Increased private and corporate resources on the local, state and national levels—both human and financial; (4) and public policy with respect to literacy.

During a 14-month assessment period, we examined the literacy issue externally, evaluating field activity and service delivery on the national, state and local levels.

Our internal assessment included an examination of what our response could and should be, and how our goals could be accomplished. From this assessment we reached several conclusions:

(1) Communication and coordination between existing national, state and local programs is a critical need.

(2) A networking framework to enable coordination and communication to take place between public and private programs, and between programs and potential resources is essential.

(3) New approaches to service delivery and teaching techniques are a necessity.

B. Dalton's response to this massive problem has been to make literacy the primary focus on our Giving Programs. In 1982 alone, nearly a quarter of a million dollars will be invested in literacy organizations in our key market communities around the country.

Particular emphasis is being placed on the development of model programs addressing long-range planning, management training, and the exploration of new approaches to providing services.

Karl Mathiason, a widely acclaimed consultant from the Center for Community Change has been retained to assist in establishing a national framework which will initiate and support state and local literacy networks.

We believe that public education programs, public libraries, private organizations, business, and individuals can and must join forces. Providing direct funding and consultation time with our Literacy Specialist to key literacy organizations across the country has begun to lay the foundations for partnership building.

B. Dalton has joined forces with the American Library Association and others in the Coalition for Literacy to implement a national media campaign.

Model programs replicable in other communities have been identified or initiated.

Additional partners from within the private and corporate sectors are being investigated.

As a leader in our industry, we strongly believe we have a high degree of responsibility to encourage the involvement of other booksellers and the publishing industry. The Association of American Publishers (AAP) has already pledged their full support.

But, the most important step B. Dalton has taken has been to identify the key component in delivering services to people who can't read: namely, volunteers.

Funding support is being directed toward community-based projects using volunteers. Internally, we have begun a nationwide campaign to mobilize the 8,500 B. Dalton employees to encourage them to become individual tutors and community leaders in developing and supporting local literacy projects in their communities, and linking them with existing programs.

In our Minneapolis headquarters we offer time off from work for training to become a tutor, and we purchase training materials for any employee willing to help those who can't read. Even though the program is only a few months old, the response of B. Dalton employees has been overwhelming. At our headquarters there is even a waiting list for our next training session.

What's especially heartening is that our people at all levels have become actively involved in tutoring and other aspects of the literacy effort. Everyone from sales clerks, to the maintenance man at corporate headquarters, to store managers, regional managers and vice presidents, all the way up to the CEO.

To quote a recent speech by William Andres, Chairman of Dayton Hudson Corporation when accepting the Lawrence A. Wien Prize in Corporate Responsibility at Columbia University:

"What this all adds up to is this: B. Dalton has put together a comprehensive effort that includes some important elements: First, a well chosen and strategic issue (in a field where they have a special interest, concern, and expertise); second, a commitment of financial resources; and third, a commitment of time, talent, and personal resources of their people."

It is our sincere hope that we can work further with your sub-committee and committee to define appropriate public policy. We believe an effective public/private partnership can be developed.

Now, more than ever, we are all aware that neither the private sector nor the public sector can go it alone. It will only be through joint efforts and the sharing of expertise, complemented by the contributions of volunteers, that we are going to realize a solution to this problem.

Thank you gentleman for your time and willingness to listen. I would be more than happy to answer any specific questions you might have.

Mr. SIMON. We thank you very, very much. I commend you and your company. It is great. You are a marvelous witness. We are proud to have you here.

Rosalyn Stoker, from Polaroid. Maybe before we proceed with you, we have a rollcall. We are going to have to have a brief recess. I am sorry. We will be back.

I have just learned we are going to have a series of 12 amendments, so what we would like to do is, if you do not mind, we are going to enter your statement in the record. If you can proceed and the two of you can be here and then ask any questions of the two, we will proceed. We will follow. I regret that we cannot be here for your testimony personally, but we will read it with interest, and we thank you very much. Our apologies.

STATEMENT OF ROSALYN STOKER, POLAROID CO.

Ms. STOKER. Rather than reading my comments, I would like to say a few things that extend some of the things that Bette has said, and concentrate on another aspect of the problem of literacy in a slightly broader sense.

My job at Polaroid is the director of fundamental skills programs, basic skills attainment programs for employees. The employees that I work with range from entry-level workers through technical and professional people, from preacademic services through postsecondary level.

Polaroid has about 12,000 employees domestically, and about 8,000 of those are hourly workers. Ninety-five percent of those work within 50 miles of Boston, the corporate headquarters. We are basically a science company, and out of our scientific research we develop products in the chemistry and physics areas, and then market those products. Our manufacturing organizations come out of our science orientation.

This is important to stress, because it means that we have come into education and education of hourly employees from a particular set of questions and assumptions and hypotheses about how people work with each other.

The company is about 40 years old, and somewhere in 1953 or 1954 we got into the business of offering hourly employees education programs. The first programs were chemistry, and the reason we were offering chemistry is we were getting people back from the Korean war who were looking for jobs, who knew a lot about mechanics, because they had been airplane mechanics in Korea, but did not know much about machinery, our machinery, and did not know much about our chemistry, and a very important thing that happened at that point to us in terms of the development that ended up with our programs is that no one could say at that point gee, they ought to have learned that chemistry in high school, because we were inventing the chemistry, so it made sense to us that we had to teach these people how to do the work.

We have enlarged upon that somewhat since. Somewhere in the mid-1960's a decision was made that we would go into high-speed manufacturing with a new line of products which has become the SX-70 camera and film, and in order to do that we expected to hire a whole batch of semiskilled workers, and the planners in the human resource development department decided at that point that the people we were likely to be hiring would not be able to have equal access to our tuition assistance plan, which is a very important plan for our employees, being a science company, the orientation is that of course you are always learning more and more material. You start out with an assumption about learning rather than an assumption that you finish school and then go on to work.

These people we assumed were not going to be able to use that benefit, and so some in-house ad hoc basic skills education programs, English, second language, high school equivalency were planned in anticipation of the new population.

I was hired at that point to design the program. We found after a couple of years of running this program for these undereducated

people that we were expecting and in fact showed up that when we started looking at our statistics, that half the people in our program turned out to be middle-aged people that had been around the company for 10 or 15 years, who because they were performing these jobs in an adequate way supposedly knew all the basic facts and the basic math and the reading and writing skills that we had assumed that they had, but they were coming out of the woodwork as it were to acquire these in a formal setting, in a more formal setting.

Today as we are going through as many companies are reassignment programs, where we are taking people out of areas where there is no longer a lot of work, and assigning them to new areas where we are developing jobs, we are running into groups of people like the letter carrier that Bette talked about, who know a job relatively well because they learned it slowly over a period of a number of years, who are stuck in a new job or with a new assignment, where they simply do not have the technical background that their performance implied that they had, and so we are in a reeducation effort with them.

I think that this brings me to the dilemma that we face, not with the entry level underemployed worker who does not know how to read or write, but can learn. It does bring us to the middle-level technical hourly employee who does know how to read, who passed the test when he was in school, but belongs to a culture that does not read, and he costs us money, because he looks at a memo with a change order and he reads the first paragraph and says, "Oh, I know that," and then he goes on and he proceeds with the old procedure and maybe gets halfway through and has to shut down. He is the person I am concerned about, the one who passes the tests when there are tests, the one who graduated from high school, the one who simply does not belong to a culture in which reading skills are used on a daily basis, who can decode but does not apply higher cognitive skills in reading comprehension, because he is also the person who is not going to get the new jobs.

We are faced with a dilemma today, and most large corporations are, because we are changing from a mechanical society to an information society. The kinds of jobs that are coming down are jobs that people do not need basic math in. They need algebra. The education that working-class people get when they finish education in this country does not include algebra, and teachers will tell you it is because kids do not need that when they get on the job, and it is not true.

Some of the best education that goes on if not the best education that goes on in the world goes on in this country, and it is for academic children. It is not for working-class children.

Ms. McADAM. Thank you.

Ms. BRAND. Since both of your companies have obviously made such great inroads in assisting employees and others who are illiterate or as you say in a culture that I guess does not read every day, to what extent do you think other companies are doing the same thing? I take it that the two of you are leaders in these areas, but do you know of many other companies that have also done the same types of training programs, or literacy training in the community?

Ms. FENTON. We are not aware of any company that has taken on literacy as a national issue the way we have, but we are in the process of trying to seek out those that may be interested in that as part of their corporate-responsibility programs, so we have identified a number of them, and we are making those inquiries now, to have them join us in a partnership. We cannot do it alone.

Ms. BRAND. And what about training projects for employees?

Ms. STOKER. In-house. A comment made earlier about asking the kinds of programs or the kinds of efforts that one develops depends on the kinds of questions that get asked. It is not common in a corporation, in the corporate community, to assume that employees may need continuing education, especially blue-collar workers. Of the several billions of dollars that are spent in training and development in the private sector each year, almost all of it, with the exception of skills training, goes to white-collar and professional and technical workers.

As we ask the questions and as other corporations get into the dilemma where they are facing the kinds of changes that we have been facing in the changeover of our technology, I think that educational alternatives are becoming more necessary and are becoming more obvious to them. I cited the case of anticipating a population coming in that we know are probably not adequately educated for growth in jobs. What we are facing across the country now are people who are in place in jobs, who it is not appropriate to fire, who do not have the skills for the new level of technology, and we are going to have to deal with these.

I am not talking about kids coming out of high school and going into jobs and the kind of preparation they might need. I am talking about people who are 35 and 40 years old, who have been working for 20 years, who have 20 more years or 30 more years of work ahead of them, and as a nation we cannot drop them to hire a new group. They have to be reeducated.

Ms. FENTON. I would like to add that in Minneapolis we have an information session for many of the corporate foundations that have contributions programs on literacy and the issue and the impact that it has in our society, and there was a great deal of interest and very enthusiastic response.

Ms. STOKER. One other thing. The AAACE, the new merging of the Adult Education Association, and NAPCAE are at work in one of their sections in developing just that information about what kinds of corporations are doing what kinds of inhouse employment programs in basic skills education.

Ms. BRAND. Thank you.

Ms. MCADAM. How many businesses or corporations are working with you?

Ms. FENTON. At this point in time we have a formal agreement with the Association of American Publishers, and we have made many formal contacts with a number of companies, but I would hate to release those names.

Ms. MCADAM. I do not care about the names, but I just want the numbers.

Ms. FENTON. I would say 6 to 10 at this point.

Ms. McADAM. Do either of you see a way that the Federal Government could play a role encouraging other companies to do the sort of things that you are doing, and to get more involved in this?

Ms. FENTON. First off, the contributions program has the tax advantage where we are able to contribute. The law allows corporations to contribute up to 10 percent now of pretax, but that momentum has not caught on around the country as much as we had hoped it would. Dayton Hudson Corp. has been contributing 5 percent of pretax profit on an annual basis for 38 years, and up until last year that was the maximum allowed by law.

Our company has made a tremendous commitment to start 5-percent clubs in many of our communities around the country, 2-percent clubs, 1-percent clubs, so we have been on the leading edge of encouraging corporate philanthropy, and will continue to do that.

Ms. McADAM. Can you see any way that the Federal Government could encourage this?

Ms. STOKER. I should mention I think that we do not use any Federal money in our program, nor do we use a tax incentive or writeoff for the work that we do. My boss likes to point out that a corporation is in the business of spending money, and as Mr. Erdahl and Mr. Simon pointed out earlier, they are in that business because these are areas where they see that there is a priority.

There have been a number of pieces of research, a number of kinds of programs, a number of kinds of partnerships between Federal, State, county, and local programs, through the vocational programs and through the adult education programs, that have shown that on a smalltown, on a small-community, on a one-on-one company basis, on a large-company basis, that these kinds of relationships work. There is a program, you know, in a company that has 300 people in Maine, there are a lot of individual kinds of things going on in Minnesota, in Illinois, but they are not disseminated. They are not publicized. No one knows about them.

The community education people are only just beginning to ask questions about how they can work with us, the corporations, rather than—the reason I got my job 10 years ago was that Polaroid could not get community education people to be interested in reeducation of working people, and when I started attending meetings, and I started talking to my peers, who were running programs in the community, they were threatened because they were so invested in the fact that you cannot have a job unless you are literate. Everyone knows that, because that is the way my proposal reads, to justify my funding, so we need to be able to talk to each other a lot better. I think some of the new organizations are going a long way in that direction. I think the work that B. Dalton is doing is going to make the kind of work that I am doing a lot easier.

Ms. FENTON. The networking, the partnerships, the ACTION projects is a perfect example. The Coalition for Literacy, the AAACE is a member of that coalition, so being able to talk to each other and work together in the joining of forces with the public and private sector is the answer. Neither one of us can do it alone. Together we have got real strength.

Ms. McADAM. Do you think enough is being done in the public sector to foster that working relationship?

Ms. FENTON. This meeting today is a wonderful first step, but no, I really do not. I think that a great deal more can and must be done.

Ms. McADAM. Thank you both very much, and our other witnesses. The record on this hearing will be held open for another 2 weeks, so that anyone who desires may submit testimony to be included, the written testimony to be included in the record.

Thank you very much. The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:10 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

[Material submitted for inclusion in the record follows:]

TESTIMONY SUBMITTED BY THE ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY BASED EDUCATION

The Association for Community Based Education (ACBE) is pleased to have this opportunity to present testimony regarding the important issue of adult illiteracy in the United States. ACBE is the national membership association representing community based educational institutions which work in low-income and minority communities around the country. Our members are deeply concerned about illiteracy, and its link to a complex of other problems, including joblessness or underemployment, poverty, and social alienation. They have made—and continue to make—significant efforts to combat illiteracy, efforts which we believe need to be considered as a new national policy regarding illiteracy is developed.

SUMMARY

The existence of adult illiteracy can no longer be ignored. Illiteracy cuts across social classes, and is found in rural and urban areas alike. Existing federal programs, largely operating in school-based settings, are reaching only the tip of the iceberg. If the Federal government wishes to significantly reduce the incidence of illiteracy it must encourage efforts that go beyond the classroom, into the community.

As explained in greater detail below, ACBE recommends that as part of any strategy for combatting adult illiteracy, the Federal government:

(1) *Support a coordinating national strategy to combat illiteracy, involving public and private sector organizations, and including community based educational institutions.*—Community based groups should be among the active participants in policy development and planning.

(2) *Fund local programs offered by community based groups.*—These groups provide educational services to those who do not self-select into more traditional programs, particularly in low income and minority communities.

(3) *Create a mechanism by which innovative and successful models of literacy education can be disseminated,* including the non-traditional models that have proven effective with hard-to-reach illiterates developed by community based educational institutions.

A detailed background and rationale for these recommendations is provided below.

RATIONALE

Adult Illiteracy Has Become a Matter of Serious Concern.—Adult illiteracy, whether viewed as an isolated phenomenon or as part of a larger complex involving poverty, joblessness and cultural-political powerlessness, has emerged in recent years as a matter of pressing concern. In the United States today there are at least 23 million persons who can be described as functional illiterate—that is, unable because of lack of literacy skills to function independently and productively within the society. As the society becomes increasingly technologically complex, and as the society's ability to subsidize its less productive members shrinks, literacy will become an even more critical survival skill than it is now.

Most Literacy Programs Are Reaching Only the Tip of the Iceberg.—The fact that one of the most literate nations in the world has a serious problem of adult illiteracy has not gone unnoticed. A number of programs have been set up, the largest of which are the Federal Adult Basic Education Program and the volunteer programs operated through Laubach Literacy and Literacy Volunteers of America. However,

they are reaching, at the most, only about four million people. And they are not reaching the population most in need. The adult basic education programs, operating through the public school system, and the national volunteer programs, operating primarily with middle-class volunteers, attract only the "cream" of the illiterate population—persons already socialized enough into middle-class norms to self-select into the programs.

Often These Programs Fail To Meet Learner Needs.—Within these programs dropout rates of 25 percent to 50 percent are common. Evidence from evaluations of the Federal programs suggests that the dropout problem may be due at least in part to use of outmoded methods and materials, and to an emphasis on teachers' rather than learners' own objectives. As one Federal study put it:

"Those objectives most amenable to exact measurement tend to displace all others. . . . Adult educators talk a great deal about the role of copying skills in ABE but this interest has seldom been translated into classroom practice. . . . Teachers are universally encouraged to prepare their own materials in an effort to relate content to specific interests of their students, but they do so infrequently. . . . It is curious that the relevance of learning and what is to be learned are seldom discussed in ABE classes but are left implicit and assumed." (Mezirow et al, pp. 26-27)

What does, all too often, occur is education similar to "that of the elementary school of the 1920's." (Mezirow et al, p. 18)

The classroom-based model itself presents major problems for persons with a history of alienation and failure from conventional education. Most simply stay away; others quickly drop out.

The national volunteer programs are often conducted in home settings, eliminating the stigma associated with "school" programs. However, they too tend to focus on a narrow range of reading and mathematical skills rather than the larger issues associated with functional and social literacy.

The "bottom line," therefore, has an ironic twist. The U.S. has helped fund a number of successful literacy programs in third world countries, stressing such interrelated themes as:

Integration of literacy with broader development efforts;

Learner-centered approaches, emphasizing analyzing the environment, identifying problems, and making decisions;

Community-based initiatives for learning programs, stressing learner participation in developing materials, teaching peers and evaluating programs.

U.S. educators have assisted in creating the programs—usually non-formal and informal models that link literacy and economic development, use peer teachers, stress identification and solving of life problems, and focus on empowerment and critical thinking. Such programs have proved successful in less developed countries. But in our own country, with our own disadvantaged learners (in many ways a set of "less developed" rural and urban subcultures within our own borders, the dominant educational model draws on little of this experience and knowledge. Instead, too often we provide literacy education divorced from its social and economic context, a kind of "literacy in a vacuum."

To say this is not to deny the real accomplishments of existing literacy programs. They have helped a great many people. But we must face the reality that these programs are not meeting the needs of many of their alleged constituents. And we must also realize that the vast majority of the population in need is not being reached—and probably cannot be reached—by these programs.

Community Based Programs Offer a Different Approach.—In the above discussion we have purposely omitted discussion of programs operated by community-based educational institutions (CBEIs). CBEIs are groups set up to serve a given geographical area and constituency—usually urban or rural poverty communities, and the educationally, economically and socially disadvantaged. They are formed by their constituencies—including urban Blacks, reservation and urban Native Americans, Chicanos, welfare mothers, farmworkers, and other ethnic, racial and cultural minorities—to meet specific needs that exist within the community. Their goals inevitably go beyond mere provision of educational services to missions of individual and community empowerment. They often link education and community development activities. Their methodological approaches are non-traditional, to meet the needs of those whom traditional education has failed, and learner-centered, focused on helping people meet objectives they themselves set in response to their own needs.

Collectively, CBEIs represent effective and tested answers to the problems that have plagued adult education for decades: they provide meaningful educational services to millions of adults (conservative estimates place this number at more than 25 million) disenchanted with or unable to use the conventional system; they help, through education, to increase the flow of low-income and disadvantaged youth and

adults into the mainstream of society focusing on those non-traditional learners that more conventional institutions have not been able to reach; they have developed diverse approaches to learning always tailored to the specific needs of the student; they are structured to be accountable to the people in the communities within which they operate; they are responsive to community aspirations maintaining an active commitment to a mission of community development; they have developed strong linkages with the community, integrating learning with the life/work experiences of the learner; they are easily accessible to community people because of their existence within the community, their low cost, and the nature of their services which are consistent with client need; and they are cost-efficient, using existing community resources, and avoiding wasteful physical plants.

Unlike Other Programs, Community Based Programs Reach the "Hard Core" Illiterate Population.—Because CBELs have close ties to the communities they serve, they are able to recruit persons who would not align themselves with a public school-based program or one staffed by middle class volunteers. However, the programs do not simply wait for learners to self-select in. Rather, CBELs conduct aggressive outreach and recruitment efforts, involving such techniques as volunteer-staffed door-to-door surveys and creation of neighborhood information networks.

CBELs also retain their learners. Among ACBE member programs offering literacy education, retention rates of 85-95% are common.

Community Based Programs Have Created Innovative and Highly Successful Models of Literacy Education.—CBELs reflect their developmental and learner-centered missions in the literacy programs they operate. Many CBELs provide literacy training in conjunction with community economic development activities. Almost all tailor their instruction to the needs and concerns of their learners. Here are some examples of successful approaches:

A Texas program, recognizing (like many other community based programs) that literacy involves a sense of oneself in the world as much as the ability to read and write, uses discussion as the springboard for literacy skills development. Program facilitators conduct personal interviews among potential enrollees, and develop themes, for the program based on the group's expressed needs and interests (Barrio Education Project).

An Alabama program links literacy and basic skills training with cooperative formation (Federation of Southern Cooperatives).

A California program offers home-based classes to offset the stigma of "school;" learners write their own text in the course of the sessions (Colegio de la Tierra).

Despite Their Success, Community Based Programs and Approaches Are Often Ignored by Policymakers and Funding Sources.—Although the successes of community based programs have been amply documented in the literature, community based programs have rarely been consulted when national strategies to overcome illiteracy are being considered. Nor are the successful approaches CBELs have developed examined as replicable models.

This inattention is not willful. Rather, it appears to be a function of people simply not knowing what, exactly, these small, community-centered groups are accomplishing at the local level; and also, perhaps, not knowing how best to involve a network of independent and autonomous local practitioners in a national agenda for change. Because community based groups are small, and locally based, and because they lack the time or resources to write up their successes, their efforts seem to "fall through the cracks," to the detriment of the field as a whole.

To Meet the Challenge of Literacy Education, an Integrated, Cooperative Effort Is Required and Community Based Groups Must Be Involved.—It will not be possible to reach a significant percentage of the nation's 23,000,000 illiterate adults without a concerted national effort to do so. For such an effort to bear fruit, the current fragmentation of literacy efforts among the various public and private sector groups working in the field must end. Cooperation is needed. All the groups involved in adult literacy have something to teach—and something to learn—and Federal initiatives can support such sharing and cooperation.

Certainly community based groups have a great deal to offer. At the local level they are—perhaps more than any other groups in the literacy field—working at the cutting edge of program development. And nationally they are an as yet untapped force for productive change. They can be an effective voice in national policy development, and a source of programmatic innovation from which the whole field can benefit.

However, budgets for these groups are tight, and resources are difficult to come by. Direct support is needed if community based groups are to provide services at the level needed to impact the problem nationwide. Such support will help these

groups develop and expand existing programs, and document methods and circulate for the benefit of the field as a whole.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above analysis, the Association for Community Based Education would like to recommend that the Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education consider the following activities:

1. *Support a coordinated national strategy by combat illiteracy, involving public and private sector organizations, and including community based educational institutions.*—Community based groups should be among the active participants in policy development and planning.
2. *Fund local programs offered by community based groups.*—These groups provide educational services to those who do not self-select into more traditional programs, particularly in low income and minority communities.
3. *Create a mechanism by which innovative and successful models of literacy education can be disseminated,* including the non-traditional models that have proven effective with hard-to-reach illiterates developed by community based educational institutions.

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